

Promising Practice: Community Partnerships—Cooperation Over Competition Southland Health Care Forum

Is your organization a community college striving to provide customized training to meet local employers' needs? Or perhaps you represent a community-based organization, helping individuals find jobs that lead to a career with family-sustaining wages. For all types of organizations, building a comprehensive workforce development program requires developing partnerships with a diverse group of organizations in your community, including State and local public agencies, private and non-profit partners, and members of the business community. These are some of the groups your organization should be partnering with:

- Workforce Investment Boards, Workforce Development Agencies, and State Workforce Agencies
- Community Colleges and Postsecondary Education Providers
- Adult Basic Education Providers
- TANF providers and Human Service Agencies
- Economic Development Agencies
- Community-based Organizations
- Employers and Business Representatives
- Apprenticeship Offices

HPOG grantee Southland Health Care Forum (SHCF) is a non-profit workforce development and training agency, formed as a consortium by St. James and other local hospitals in 2003. Over the years, SHCF has developed a mutually beneficial relationship with community partner Prairie State College (PSC).

Located only a mile apart, these two organizations share the same student demographics. Many SHCF staff actually attended PSC or worked there. This familiarity with PSC, and its staff and administration, has contributed to strong professional relationships between the two organizations. SHCF can contact various departments of PSC at all levels to expedite services for students, remove barriers, and make programmatic changes for continuous improvement. SHCF and PSC have collaborated to establish customized business office, accounting, and records access and procedures in support of the HPOG program.

Another example of successful coordination between these partners is the provision of tutoring services for HPOG participants. Originally, tutoring was delivered at PSC. The team decided that it would be preferable to have tutoring and mentoring at the SHCF site because it would give SHCF staff better access to HPOG students, making it easier to provide supportive services, case management, and barrier management.

During the relocation of the tutoring services, a PSC nursing faculty member was designated as the tutoring coordinator who would teach onsite at SHCF. The tutoring coordinator provides one-on-one and group tutoring, mentoring, and examination preparation services. This has

helped participants to fully learn and understand complex information presented in the class and to address barriers. Students are able to ask questions, demonstrate, and practice techniques presented in the classroom as they prepare for quizzes, examinations, and clinical demonstration.

This practice has improved SHCF's ability to manage its HPOG program by maintaining close proximity and contact with students. They are readily available to help students when they need assistance and provide the support they need to prepare them for employment. Without the strong relationship between these two organizations, coordination of the tutoring services would not have been possible. SHCF and PSC continue to work closely to make the program adjustments needed to ensure the continuing success of their students.